

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Windham Millwork Inc.

Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Lean Practices Transform Windham Millwork

Client Profile:

Windham Millwork, Inc. is a family owned company specializing in architectural woodwork, wood moldings, hospital and other major commercial casework, cabinets, and doors. The company employs 65 craftsmen and design support professionals at its Windham, Maine facility.

Situation:

Windham Millwork has enjoyed success and business growth for many years and is poised for a significant step forward in capturing more of the market. To do so requires maximum efficiency throughout the company. Windham Millwork asked the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Maine MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help identify areas that need improvement.

Solution:

Maine MEP took a preliminary tour of Windham Millwork's facility as part of its assessment and identified several issues that needed to be addressed, including poor layout, excess and obsolete inventory, unbalanced work floor, large batch sizes, lack of visual controls, extended bid and design processes, and numerous examples of the "eight wastes," including excess material and people movement, rework, no point-of-use storage for tools and parts, and no defined work teams.

Maine MEP suggested Windham Millwork employ a lean transformation strategy to achieve its efficiency goals. After participating in Time Wise 101 training, Windham Millwork participated in a value stream mapping exercise, followed by a kaizen implementation event. The intensive kaizen implementation process helped Windham's cabinet team to dramatically improve plant layout and material handling, resulting in increased capacity without additional manpower costs. The company is now poised to grow without additional expense.

Results:

Reduced plant floor space required for the manufacture and storage of cabinets by 30 percent.

Utilizing freed space for new product line.

Reduced product throughput time from 10 days to 4 days.

Reduced labor per cabinet by at least 20 percent to save costs in excess of \$140,000 per year.

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Improved bid-to-design process, reducing work requirements by at least 33 percent.

Reduced number of re-entering errors in bid to design process, saving \$30,000 per year.

Testimonial:

"Windham Millwork is extremely pleased with the results achieved through our work with Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership...until I utilized their services inside my own company I really did not have a good concept of how they can help transform a company from a good manufacturer to a world class manufacturer."

Bruce Pulkkinen, Owner